

Get Emergency Ready

Your Personal Preparedness Guide



Call **311**

Toronto's Emergency Management Program

The Toronto Emergency Management Program Committee (TEMPC) provides executive leadership and policy direction to manage the strategic response to an emergency event by mobilizing necessary resources. The TEMPC also provides the City with an effective vehicle for developing and maintaining a comprehensive emergency management program as well as managing emergency response activities.

The Office of Emergency Management (OEM) oversees activities on behalf of the Toronto Emergency Management Program Committee to improve the safety and protection of Toronto residents and essential services during an emergency.

Emergency 9-1-1

Get Emergency Ready is produced by the City of Toronto,
Office of Emergency Management.

Additional copies are available from:
City of Toronto, Office of Emergency Management
Phone: 416-392-4554 Email: oem@toronto.ca

For more information and an electronic version of this guide:

toronto.ca/oem



Get Emergency Ready

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Get Emergency Ready

Preparing for an Emergency

Emergencies are a fact of life. They occur in communities and cities around the world, and they have the potential to put your health, safety and security at risk.

There are simple steps you can take to help protect yourself and your loved ones during an emergency.

This guide is designed to help you prepare for an emergency and know what to do when one occurs.

Being emergency ready means that:

- You have a plan so that you and your family know what to do in an emergency
- You have an emergency kit with food, water and supplies to last at least 72 hours
- You have insurance to help protect your home and family

Depending on the nature of the emergency:

- You may need to look after your own needs and those of your family for up to 72 hours after an emergency occurs
- Emergency services personnel may not be able to reach you immediately or they may have to focus their initial efforts elsewhere
- You may need to evacuate your home with little or no notice
- You may have to remain in your residence with little or no access to external sources of food, water and other supplies

Your Emergency Plan

Being prepared for an emergency starts with having a plan. Make sure everyone in your family knows what to do during and after an emergency.

Your plan should include:

- Where and how to exit your home safely (doors, windows, and stairways)
- A location, outside your home, where you will meet
- The location of your emergency kit(s)
- The name of a person away from the emergency who can act as your family's contact if you get separated at any point. Make sure that everyone knows this person's name, address and telephone number
- A list of key telephone numbers and addresses

Review and update your plan at least once each year

72 hours is a long time without food and water. Being prepared for an emergency can significantly reduce the hardship you may experience during a local or city-wide emergency.

Get Emergency Ready

Your 72 Hour Emergency Kit

Whether you're just starting to prepare or are a preparedness pro, gathering your emergency supplies isn't hard. A good rule of thumb is to have supplies for at least 3 days or 72 hours. You'll probably be surprised at how much you already have.

Your Emergency Kit

- Enough drinking water for three days (4 litres per person per day)
- A battery powered or crank radio and flashlight
- Batteries for flashlights and radios
- Three days supply of non-perishable food that meets your dietary needs, including food for infants, children, seniors, and pets if required
- Manual can opener
- A first aid kit
- Prescription drugs, medical supplies and special equipment
- An "In Case of Emergency" information sheet about your special needs or disability including contact information for your healthcare provider(s), caregiver(s) or personal attendant(s), or your service animals' veterinarian, and a detailed list of all prescriptions and medications

Go Bag

In addition to the 72 hour preparedness kit, every member of your household should pack a Go Bag — a collection of items you may need in the event of an evacuation. A Go Bag should be packed in a sturdy, easy-to-carry container such as a backpack or suitcase on wheels. A Go Bag should be easily accessible if you have to leave your home in a hurry. Make sure it is ready to go at all times of the year.

Get Emergency Ready

Everyone's Go Bag will be different and based on individual needs. Consider including the following in yours:

- Copies of your important documents such as passports, bank account numbers, credit cards, health card, social insurance cards, family records, insurance policies, photo IDs, proof of address, etc.
- A copy of your "In Case of Emergency" information sheet
- A list of all the medications you take and how often
- Extra set of car and house keys
- Credit and ATM cards and cash, especially in small denominations
- Bottled water and non-perishable food, such as energy or granola bars
- Contact list and meeting place information for your household
- Child care supplies or other special care items

Also ensure to:

- Keep cell phone batteries charged and have an alternate battery, car charger or portable battery bank
- Keep flashlights where you can find them in the dark
- Replenish food and water supplies on an on-going basis
- Use surge protecting power bars to protect sensitive electronic equipment
- If you store extra medication in your Go Bag, be sure to refill it before it expires

Preparing for an Emergency



Special Considerations

For Children and Infants:

- Formula
- Bottles
- Diapers
- Medications
- Favourite toy

For Pets:

- Food, water and bowls
- Leash/harness and muzzle
- ID tags and licences
- Medications, and vaccination/medical records
- Blanket and favourite toy(s)
- Local animal shelter phone numbers

Check your insurance

As a homeowner or renter, help protect yourself by having adequate insurance coverage. Insurance can help you replace what's lost, and help cover your expenses if you are forced to leave your home during an emergency. Discuss your needs with an insurance representative.

- Consider preparing a kit for each member of your family, and a larger kit containing common items such as food, water and other equipment. Consider storing your kit(s) in backpacks so they're easy to carry.
- Check your kit twice each year to ensure the freshness of food, water and medications and add new items as needed. An easy way to remember is to do it when you change your clocks and smoke alarm batteries.
- If you choose to purchase an emergency kit or first aid kit, make sure you add items that reflect your own needs and preferences.

Get Emergency Ready

Your Vehicle Emergency Kit:

- Shovel, scraper and snow brush
- Sand, salt and/or cat litter for traction, antifreeze
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Spare clothing, shoes and blankets
- Tow rope, jumper cables and windshield-washer fluid
- Warning light or road flares, shovel and fire extinguisher
- First aid kit with seatbelt cutter
- Water and food (such as energy bars)
- Roadmaps, whistle and flashlight

TIP

Keep your gas tank at least half full, especially in the winter.

Preparing for an Emergency



People with Disabilities and Special Needs

If you have special needs, require personal attendant care or use life-sustaining equipment:

- Arrange in advance for someone to check on you in the event of an emergency
- Wear a MedicAlert bracelet or carry an identification card
- Carry a personal alarm that emits a loud noise to draw attention to you
- Label your equipment and attach instructions on how to use and transport it
- Connect with your health care service provider if you have one

Your emergency kit should also include:

- Prescription drugs, medical supplies and special equipment
- Information about your special needs or disability
- Foods that meet your dietary needs
- A detailed list of all prescriptions and medications

Assisting People with Disabilities or Special Needs

- Always ask if a person wants or needs your help. Do not touch the person, their service animal or their assistive devices without their permission
- Ask if they are injured or have any loss of movement and/or sensation
- Call 911 for emergency medical assistance when needed
- Do not try to lift, support or assist in moving a person unless you know how to do it safely. Get help from a trained person
- Follow instructions posted on special needs equipment and assistive devices

Potential Risks in Toronto

Over the years, City of Toronto residents have experienced various emergency situations including floods, power failures, health emergencies, hazardous material spills and accidents.

Emergencies fall into three main categories:

- **Natural Events** such as severe weather, major storms, flooding and health emergencies
- **Technological or Environmental Accidents** such as chemical spills, building collapse, utility disruptions and power failures
- **Human-Caused Incidents** such as acts of terrorism and nuclear power accidents



Extreme Weather

Toronto is experiencing more severe weather events, with higher rainfall levels occurring over a shorter amount of time, which increases pressure on the sewer and road drainage system. When extreme weather occurs, the sewer system can become overloaded, leading to surface and basement flooding.

Tips to help flood-proof your home:

- Disconnect your downspouts from the sewer system, where feasible (without negatively affecting neighbouring properties or creating an area where water will pool on a sidewalk or driveway). Ensure the water drains away from the foundation. In the City of Toronto it is mandatory to disconnect your downspouts
- Fix cracks in your foundation
- Ensure the ground slopes away from your house
- Clear eavestroughs and downspouts of leaves and other debris that prevent proper drainage
- Increase the green space around your home with native plants and shrubs and install porous pavement to help absorb rainwater and melted snow
- Hire a City-licensed and qualified plumber to install a backwater valve and a properly-sized sump pump. Ensure proper and regular maintenance of these devices. Sump pumps need power to work, so consider adding a back-up power source
 - The City's Basement Flooding Protection Subsidy Program offers a maximum of \$3,400 to qualified homeowners for installing approved basement flooding mitigation devices including backwater valves and sump pumps
- Avoid creating blockages in pipes that can lead to a back-up:
 - Do not flush down the toilet items such as dental floss, wipes, condoms, tampons, razor blades or anything that can block the sanitary pipe
 - Do not pour any fats, oils or grease down the drain

For more information what to do if your basement floods and actions you can take to help prevent it, visit: **toronto.ca/basementflooding**

Extreme Heat and Cold

Children and seniors, people with chronic health problems and special needs, the homeless, people who work or exercise vigorously outdoors are especially vulnerable to extreme heat and cold.

Heat

Prolonged exposure to high summer temperatures and heat waves may be harmful to your health:

- Drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration and avoid alcoholic drinks
- Wear lightweight and loose-fitting clothing
- Take a cool shower or bath
- Avoid strenuous exercise
- Never leave children or pets alone in a parked car
- Visit air conditioned buildings, such as libraries, malls and City cooling centres

Cold

Improper use of heating equipment in your home may cause burns and fires. To minimize the risk of injury or fire:

- Use space heaters with caution and ensure they are approved for indoor use
- Keep combustible materials at least three feet away from sources of heat
- Do not leave heating equipment unattended

Get Emergency Ready

Winter Storms

Winter storms such as blizzards, ice storms and heavy snowfalls may create hazardous conditions and cause power disruptions. Being prepared for severe weather can help minimize your risk of injury.

- Do not travel unless absolutely necessary
- Keep children and pets indoors
- If you must go outside, dress for the weather

Precautions:

- Prepare your vehicle for winter driving conditions
- Keep an emergency kit in your vehicle
- Keep your gas tank at least half full at all times
- Carefully remove snow and ice from your natural gas meter, regulator, and all appliance exhaust vents

Emergency Shelter

If you do not have anywhere to take shelter from the weather you can contact the City of Toronto's Central Intake line at 1-877-338-3398 (24hrs) to request an emergency shelter bed. You can also go in person to the Streets to Homes Assessment and Referral Centre, located at 129 Peter Street (at Richmond Street).

Tornadoes and High-Speed Winds

Tornadoes and high-speed winds can cause death, injury and millions of dollars in property damage. Tornados are usually preceded by a severe thunderstorm, black skies and heavy rain.

If you are indoors:

- Take shelter immediately, preferably in a basement
- If there isn't a basement, take cover on the ground floor in a small room in the centre of the house. Smaller rooms are more structurally sound
- Crouch or lie flat, and take cover under sturdy furniture
- Stay away from windows, doors, exterior walls and glass objects
- Protect your head and neck

If you are outdoors:

- Lie flat in a ditch, ravine or other low-lying area and protect your head and neck
- Stay away from trees and objects that may become airborne

If you are in a vehicle:

- Get out of your vehicle. Find shelter or lie flat and protect your head and neck
- Stay away from your vehicle and other objects which may become airborne

Precautions:

- When a wind or tornado warning is issued bring all unsecured objects, including patio furniture indoors. Small objects may become projectiles in high-speed winds
- Regularly maintain trees and remove damaged and/or diseased limbs

Did you know?

Ontario averages 20 tornadoes each year.

Source: Environment Canada

Get Emergency Ready

Floods

Major rain storms can cause flooding, especially in low-lying areas. Flash floods may occur without warning as streams and rivers overflow their banks. Heavy rain may also cause sewers to back up.

The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority 24 hour flood hotline number is 416-661-6514.

If you are indoors:

- Stay inside and do not travel unless absolutely necessary
- Keep children and pets indoors

If you are outdoors:

- Seek shelter immediately
- Keep everyone away from lakes, rivers, creeks and low-lying areas that may be prone to flooding

If you are in a vehicle:

- Get out of your vehicle and sit on the hood if you cannot safely leave the flooded area
- Do not drive in low-lying areas where flooding may occur

If flooding is imminent:

- Remove furniture and other valuables from your basement to prevent water damage
- If you can safely do it, turn off your furnace, gas and electricity

Never step into a flooded basement or other room if water may be in contact with electrical outlets, appliances or cords. The water could be energized and could shock or electrocute you.

Health Emergencies

Health emergencies may be caused by the spread of communicable diseases and contaminants in air, food or water.

- Contact your family doctor or health care provider immediately if you suspect that you or any member of your family has been exposed to a communicable disease
- Follow quarantine instructions issued by public health officials

Preventative Measures:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water
- Cover your nose and mouth when you sneeze or cough
- If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your sleeve
- Vaccinations may be available to help prevent the spread of disease

For more information related to health, visit: **toronto.ca/health**



Did you know?
According to the World Health Organization, a total of 8,098 people worldwide became sick with SARS during the 2003 outbreak. Of these, 774 died.

In 1918, the “Spanish Flu” pandemic claimed more than 30,000 Canadian lives in just five months. It ranks as Canada’s worst disaster in terms of loss of life.

Power Failures and Utility Disruptions

Power failures and utility disruptions can be caused by failures in the system or external events such as severe weather. A power outage may last from a few minutes to a few days. Prolonged power outages in extreme hot or cold weather may put your health and safety at risk.

Toronto Hydro Power Disruption Hotline number is 416-542-8000.

Power outage centre on the web: outages.torontohydro.com or follow us on Twitter **@torontohydro**

- Unplug electrical appliances to prevent damage caused by power surges. Power can be restored more easily when the electrical system is not overloaded
- Use home generators with caution and only outdoors in well ventilated areas. Follow manufacturers' instructions
- Do not use charcoal or gas barbecues or camping/heating equipment indoors
- Stay clear of downed powerlines
- In extreme weather, you may be responsible for repairs before power is restored

Enbridge Gas Distribution

If you smell natural gas or suspect a leak, leave the area and call 1-866-763-5427.

Don't use your telephone or cellular phone. Call from a neighbour's phone.

Nuclear Power

Toronto's neighbouring municipality of Pickering is home to the Pickering Nuclear Generating Station. In the unlikely event of an incident at the facility, authorities will provide detailed instructions regarding what residents should do.

Fire

In the event of fire:

- Sound fire alarm and alert others
- Do not use elevators
- Leave the building via the nearest exit
- Call 911 as soon as it is safe to do so
- If you cannot leave the building, stay close to the floor and cover your mouth and nose to avoid inhaling smoke – smoke and heat rise, so the air is clearer and cooler near the floor
- If your clothes catch fire stop, drop and roll to smother the flames

Preventative Measures:

- Install smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors throughout your home and outside all bedrooms
- Regularly check the batteries and replace twice each year
- Prepare and practise your escape plan. Identify all exits and arrange an outside meeting place and a safe location to call 911. The best place to meet is in front of your home where firefighters will arrive



Hazardous Materials Accidents

Hazardous materials, such as chemicals, fuels and solvents are harmful to people and the environment. Many chemicals cannot be seen or smelled, but they can be deadly. Accidents are more likely to occur in areas where hazardous materials are stored, used and transported such as industrial parks and along highways or railways.

In the event of an accident or spill, you may have to evacuate your home:

- Stay away from, and upwind of, the accident area
- If emergency personnel issue an order to evacuate, leave the area immediately
- Do not re-enter the area until emergency personnel tell you it is safe to do so



Did you know?
The Mississauga train derailment in 1979 prompted the biggest evacuation in Canadian history. A quarter of a million people were evacuated from their homes.

Terrorism

Generally, people have come to associate terrorism with violent events occurring in other countries. Recent events have shown that Canada is not free from acts of terrorism and there are things you can do to help keep your community safe and secure.

Be Aware of Suspicious Activity:

- Unusual interest in high-risk or symbolic targets, such as inappropriate videos or photograph-taking, annotating maps, note-taking, or using binoculars and night-vision goggles
- Unusual activity, such as someone overdressed for the weather, carrying excessively heavy backpacks (or suitcases), accompanied with nervous behaviour
- Not just inappropriate photo-taking, but attempting to hide it (e.g. trying to take a cell phone picture but obscuring with a jacket)
- Counting or timing passengers or pedestrians
- Testing of security or making note of security camera locations and/or coverage
- Fraudulent identification, such as fake passports or driver's licenses
- Fraudulent corporate or security guard identification, uniforms or vehicles
- Numerous visitors, perhaps those who arrive and leave at unusual hours, trying to be unnoticed or acting in a suspicious manner
- Large, unusual, high-risk deliveries; watch for vehicles delivering hazardous materials parked or driving in an inappropriate area, unusual deliveries of chemicals or fertilizer, unattended boxes in public access places, or unusual mail

If you see or hear anything suspicious:

- Notify authorities immediately – call 911
- Do not move or open suspicious packages

Get Emergency Ready

Coping with Emergencies

Sheltering in place or evacuating – what's the difference?

During an emergency, you may be asked to stay inside (shelter in place) or evacuate. In the event of an emergency, officials will advise you on whether you should stay inside or leave.

Shelter in place

If you are asked to shelter in place, there are ways you can protect your family and your property. You should have:

- Your emergency kit and non-perishable food ready and on hand
- A personal alarm or whistle that emits a loud noise that will draw attention to your whereabouts if you need help
- A white cloth to hang up in a window and/or a balcony to identify your location if you need to signal for help
- Ink marker to write messages on doors, windows or a cloth - if you need to signal for help
- Aluminum foil to cover vent openings

Evacuation

If you must evacuate your home:

- Follow the directions of emergency personnel
- Let someone know that you've left and where you can be found
- Turn off your lights and appliances (except your refrigerator and freezer)
- Turn off or reduce your heat or air conditioning
- Lock your doors

Remember to bring the following with you if it is safe to do so:

- Your Go-Bag
- Cell phone, laptop, tablet, chargers and battery banks
- Clothing and toiletries for each family member
- Formula, bottles, diapers, favourite books, games and toys for infants and children

Do not leave your pets or service animals behind:

- Pets may become lost and/or not survive on their own
- Bring food and water, medications, favourite toys, identification tags and licenses for your pets
- Bring your leash/harness and pet carrier
- Toronto Animal Services works with homeowners during emergencies to provide options for dealing with their pets

High rise residents

There are specific steps that highrise residents can take to plan for emergencies. Residents should know:

For your building:

- The building superintendent's name and phone number
- Locations of fire extinguishers, automated external defibrillator units and oxygen tanks
- Location of emergency evacuation device(s)
- Location of emergency exits
- Who conducts your building's evacuation drills and how often
- Who the floor monitors are (if the building has floor monitors)
- Where to assemble if the building is evacuated



Clean Water

- Make sure you have at least a three day supply of water for each member of your family in your emergency kit
- If your water supply is disrupted, you may have to find other sources of water. Other sources include hot water tanks, toilet flush tanks, rainwater and ice cubes
- Do not use chemically-treated toilet water or water from the toilet bowl



After an Emergency

- Check in and around your home for damage
- Dispose of any spoiled or contaminated foods, especially after a power outage. If you're not sure, throw it out
- Encourage family members to talk about their experience and their feelings, especially children
- Contact other family members to let them know that you are safe

Check for damaged utilities

Natural Gas

Natural gas is colourless, odourless and non-poisonous. Natural gas has no odour so a rotten egg smell is added for your safety. If you smell natural gas:

- Open doors and windows
- Call Enbridge Gas Distribution at 1-866-763-5427
- Don't use your telephone or cellular phone. Call from a neighbour's phone
- Don't turn any electrical switches, appliances or computers on or off
- Don't smoke or use lighters or matches, or start any motors near the leak

Electrical

Check for damage such as frayed wires, sparks or the smell of hot insulation:

- Don't operate electrical switches or appliances
- Turn off the system at the main fuse box/breaker panel

Water

Check for leaks:

- Shut off water at the main valve where the water pipe enters your home

Do not turn on the gas, electricity or water until your utility provider has investigated and confirmed that it is safe to do so.

Get Emergency Ready

Emergency Contacts

Personal Emergency Contacts

Local Contacts:

Nearest Relatives:

Out-of-Area Relatives:

Medical:

**Get Emergency
Ready**

Emergency Meeting Place (Outside the home):

School(s)/Daycare:

Insurance Company:

Other:

If people or property are at risk:

News and updates during an emergency

Updates, warnings, instructions and other information will be broadcast on local radio and television stations.

City of Toronto

- **City of Toronto website:** toronto.ca
- **Call 311**

Weather Warnings and Updates

- **Environment Canada:** weatheroffice.gc.ca/canada_e.html
- **The Weather Network:** theweathernetwork.com/

Emergency Numbers

- **Toronto Hydro Power Disruption Hotline**
416-542-8000
- **Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
24-hour flood hotline**
416-661-6514
- **Reporting Gas Leaks**
1-866-SMEL-GAS (1-866-763-5427)

Call 911

Current Road Conditions

- Ontario Ministry of Transportation:
mto.gov.on.ca/english/traveller

Travel Health Information and Services

- **Travel Health Advisories:**
phac-aspc.gc.ca/tmp-prmv/pub-eng.php
- **Public Health Agency of Canada:**
phac-aspc.gc.ca/index-eng.php

Non-Emergency Phone Numbers

- **Fire:** 416-338-9000
- **Police:** 416-808-2222

DO NOT call 911 to:

- **Locate relatives**
- **Find the location of shelters and other services**
- **Find the non-emergency phone numbers for Fire, Police or Toronto Paramedic Services**

Use 311 for these types of inquiries.



toronto.ca/oem



INFORMATION SHEET

In Case of Emergency Call 911

Get **Emergency**
Ready

CONTACT INFORMATION

First Name _____ Last Name _____

Address _____ Apt. _____

City _____ Postal Code _____

Main Phone _____ Alt. Phone _____

Health Card _____ Birth Date _____

Primary Language(s) _____ Gender M F

Advanced Care Directive On file with _____

Cut here and store in a safe place.

Emergency Contact 1 _____

Main Phone _____ Alt. Phone _____

Emergency Contact 2 _____

Main Phone _____ Alt. Phone _____

Primary Care Provider _____

Phone _____

RELEVANT MEDICAL HISTORY

Cardiac (angina, heart attack, bypass, pacemaker)

Stroke/TIA

Hypertension (high blood pressure)

Congestive heart failure

Asthma

COPD (emphysema, bronchitis)

Seizure (convulsions)

Diabetic (Insulin/Non Insulin Dependant)

Cancer

Alzheimer

Dementia

Psychiatric

Other: _____

MEDICATIONS

1. _____ 6. _____ 11. _____
2. _____ 7. _____ 12. _____
3. _____ 8. _____ 13. _____
4. _____ 9. _____ 14. _____
5. _____ 10. _____ 15. _____

MEDICAL ALLERGIES

- No known allergies Penicillin ASA
 Sulpha Codeine
 Other _____

Cut here and store in a safe place.



SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Communicable Infection/Disease _____

Other _____

Hospital affiliation _____ Extensive history

Specialty (Dialysis, neuro, etc.) _____

MOBILITY / SENSORY

- Dentures Visual Hearing
 Mobility issues (cane/wheelchair/walker/motorized scooter/prosthetic limb)

Completed by _____

Date _____